

## THREE REALLY "BAD WORDS"

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### If But Perhaps

**T**HEY are three of the worst words. They mean "Don't do anything." You see them at work in Mr. McCay's cartoon to-day.

The tombstones above all the failures in all the graveyards ought to have these three words written on them. "IF, BUT, PERHAPS," would tell the story.

He would have done something in life, BUT whenever he started out he was faced by an IF, with a PERHAPS following close after—so he never got anywhere.

IF, means making an excuse for yourself before the struggle begins.

If you begin with "IF" you are quite apt to end with "IF," and to explain at the end that you would have been successful, IF something hadn't happened.

BUT builds up a fence between you and the thing that you want to reach. When your mind says "But," your body and your will say it.

"PERHAPS" means that you do not believe in your own plan. If YOU do not believe in it, others surely will not.

"Perhaps" if you had left those three words out of your vocabulary, you might have gone ahead and won.

"Perhaps" not.

Some will say that words have no strength in themselves, that they merely represent the thoughts of the person that uses the words.

That is partly true, largely FALSE.

You can form mental habits just as you form physical habits.

And one of the very worst mental habits, often acquired in childhood, when self-confidence should be established, is the "IF, BUT, PERHAPS" habit.

This is all very OLD truth, and every one that reads it knows it.

Nevertheless, improvement of human beings consists in making to-day's reality of OLD TRUTH.

"Honesty is the best policy"—that is old truth. But, realized, it would have saved the world from the war of 1914.

**Words Have Character and Power. Three of the Worst of Them You Can See Here, Engaged as They Usually Are in Holding Down the Giant ACTION.**

**There Is No THOUGHT Without Words, Try It in Your Own Head. You Have Got to THINK the Words of Your Thought, or No Thinking Is Done.**

Mr. McCay's cartoon on the three "bad words" can be made especially useful in the right hands. Everybody that sees this paper knows some one person that needs the warning against "IF, BUT, PERHAPS."

The picture is striking, impressive. It COMPELS THOUGHT. Sometimes a sudden thought, in the right direction, will change lifetime habits. The thing has been known.

"IF, BUT and PERHAPS" are such easy ways out of difficulty. You never spend a day without hearing one or all three of these words used as an excuse for NOT doing something.

"IF I can," or "I would, BUT," or "PERHAPS; I'll see"—those sentences you hear constantly. And they mean the moment you hear one of the three weak words that the thing, whatever it be, is NOT to be done.

Handing in his picture, Mr. McCay contributes, as usual, his own brief sermon on the picture's meaning. He writes:

"Here they sit, the three old do-nothings. And once ACTION lets them take hold, action is done for the time.

"IF is the heaviest of the three—he sits on the stomach, BUT holds down the feet. And old reliable PERHAPS holds down the wrists and head. With the three of them sitting tight there will be no action.

"Ninety per cent of the failures in this world could be divided into three great classes, or brotherhoods. There would be the 'IF Brothers,' the 'PERHAPS Brothers' and the 'BUT Brothers.'

"The ordinary man uses few words. His vocabulary does not run much above a thousand words. Shakespeare, who used more words than

**Thoughts Are Words, Words and Thoughts Establish Habits.**

**In Thinking, Avoid the Worst Habits and the Worst Words. Three of the Worst of Them Are in This Picture.**

**They All Three Mean WEAKNESS, DOUBT, and They Point the Way to Inaction, Which Means Failure.**

any other writer, ought to have written one more play before he went off to enjoy himself at the Stratford Inn, only to die instead of enjoying himself. He ought to have written on 'If, But and Perhaps,' the trouble makers.

"Cut those three words out of your vocabulary, put in almost any other three and you will be better off."

You can see, as you read history, how easily any of the three excuse words would have saved Columbus the trouble of crossing the ocean. "PERHAPS I will fall over the edge when I reach the end," or "BUT it is said that monsters big enough to swallow the ship are out on that endless sea. IF I meet one of them, what then?"

A Nihilist in his cell, sentenced to death and fearing that he might confess the names of his accomplices, determined that he must die to avoid the risk of betraying his friends. He was in a small cell, above him a narrow window with iron bars. Below the window and bars a dim oil lamp with a small wick. No weapon at hand, he had not room enough to run and dash his brains out against the stone wall.

He had every excuse for NOT doing what he thought he ought to do to save his friends. He lifted his body up by the iron bars of the window and, leaning against the small lamp, burned himself to death. There was conquest of "IF, BUT, PERHAPS" most striking.

How many hundred million human beings now working would be unborn if their parents had allowed "IF, BUT" and "PERHAPS" to prevent their marrying?

They went ahead anyhow, leaving the three weak words to take care of themselves. And so the world goes on.

The little "IF" alone would have been sufficient to kill half the great inventions. There would be no floating ships made of solid iron, no flying machines, submarines, telephones or gas engines had it not been for men able to brush "IF" aside and substitute "MUST" for "IF."

If we can get rid of these three words as excuses, and use them only as they should be used, the world would be several hundred per cent better off.

Of course, used in the right way, "IF, BUT, PERHAPS" are useful and necessary. Many a man writing for his country has said, "I may go to my death, BUT IF I do I shall have done the best I could. PERHAPS my friends will hear of it. That is all the reward I ask."

There you see "IF, BUT, PERHAPS" all employed close together and well employed.

The meaning of this editorial and picture is that, to succeed, we should keep our minds away from UNCERTAINTY.

Avoid the habit of words and thoughts that arrange failure in advance, that PREPARE us for failure and reconcile us to it.

The farther on we get in life, the harder it is to get rid of bad habits, or to form good ones.

Easy in childhood, it becomes more and more difficult later. This cartoon will interest children, from six to fifteen years of age. And after you have read this, you ought to show it and explain it to some child. The big man held down by the three queer little men will interest the mind of a child. And once INTEREST is awakened it is easy to hold attention, and push through an idea or suggestion.

However, Mr. McCay's picture is not merely for youth. It has an especial lesson for those that are getting old. Too many of us, after fifty, form the habit of saying, "I would, BUT I am not as young as I was."

The BODY is not as young. But the BRAIN, if we haven't spoiled it, is younger. For as we get older the mind should get younger, more willing to work. In every well regulated human being it can do more between fifty and sixty than it could have done at earlier ages in life, and still more between sixty and seventy.

When he brought in his picture Mr. McCay said, "I have put a cap on the head of each of these little nuisances, I don't quite know why. Perhaps you might tell your readers that the black cap is on each already, they can hang "IF, BUT, PERHAPS" in the caps I have already provided, and so get rid of them.